

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 by the Chairman, Mr. Carpender, and the following members were present:

Mr. Richard Carpender, Chair	Mrs. Marge Levesque, Clerk	Ms. Marilyn King
Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Vice Chair	Mr. Michael Buddemeyer	Ms. Angela Volpicelli
	Mrs. Cynthia Perrotti	

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Asst. Supt. Jermain, Christine Tague, Cathy Nash, Richard Updegrove, and Neil Galvin.

Absent: Amy Larsen (High School Liaison)

Mr. Galvin is representing and advising the Committee and stated that the meeting is now in Public Session. Ms. Kimberly Cunningham has requested that discussions be held in Public Session. Mr. Galvin advised the Committee that with matters pertaining to litigation, caution must be used and job performance should not be discussed during this session.

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Law 42-46-5, Exceptions (a)(1) Job Performance/Personnel Matters, and (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and/or Litigation. The employee has been notified in advance, in writing, of this meeting and of her option to move the discussion into Public Session. So voted 7-0.

Public Session recessed at 6:20 PM and resumed at 6:35 PM. A stenographer transcribed the hearing proceedings. (Please see attached stenographic record.)

The meeting recessed at 7:28 PM and reconvened at 7:38 PM. (See attached stenographic record for remainder of hearing proceedings.)

A motion was made by Mrs. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to close the hearing. So voted 7-0. Public Session was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to reconvene into Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Law 42-46-5 (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and/or Litigation. So voted 7-0.

Public Session reconvened at 8:10 PM. A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque that the administration's recommendation would be sustained, given the exhibits and testimony presented. So voted 7-0. Mr. Carpender wished Ms. Cunningham well and advised her that she is able to reapply. Mr. Galvin will prepare a written decision.

Public Session was recessed at 8:12 PM and reconvened at 8:30 PM.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Mr. Carpender reported on the Executive Sessions held tonight. The first session convened at 6:20 to discuss job performance/personnel and collective bargaining/litigation matters. No motions were made or actions were taken. The Committee reconvened into Executive Session at 7:50 to discuss collective bargaining and/or litigation.

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. So voted 7-0.

Mr. Carpender read the following statement into the record, and he announced that public comment would not be taken on it.

*As everyone is aware by now at the joint meeting with the Town Council last Thursday Council President McIntyre introduced a letter sent directly to him from Mrs. King and Miss Volpicelli. In this letter they once again changed their position on a motion they had previously supported in an attempt to sway the Council's position.*

*As you will recall 2 weeks ago in a clearly orchestrated situation when Councilwoman Gleason asked if all the members of the School Committee understood the motion that was previously passed by the School Committee it was Committee Members King and Volpicelli that rose to the podium and said they had misunderstood a rather straight forward motion and basically no longer supported it. At the time there was no prior knowledge by myself, the Superintendent, or any other Committee Member that they had taken this position as neither Mrs. King nor Miss Volpicelli extended the courtesy of letting us know they had an issue.*

*Last week their letter to Council President McIntyre showed the same indifference and lack of courtesy to the Committee. The letter was e-mailed directly to Council President McIntyre with no courtesy copies to anyone nor any intention to inform me or the other members of the Committee. The only reason I received it was because Mr. McIntyre could not open the e-mail attachment and sent it to Councilman Hamilton for assistance. Councilman Hamilton opened it and returned it to Mr. McIntyre and to his credit forwarded it to me. I received it around 4:30 and did not have time to even inform other members of the Committee. Clearly this was a second attempt to blindside the School Committee.*

*I have respect for the right of others to disagree with me and have different opinions or positions; that is the political process and why it takes a majority vote to pass a motion. I have respect for the right of an individual to change their mind – I have done so myself. However, those disagreements and reversal of opinions belong in a public debate not on the phone or at someone's home. I do not have respect for positions or actions taken by Committee members behind the scenes that are specifically intended to blindside and embarrass others on the School Committee.*

*When Councilman McIntyre introduced the letter he did so over my objections. I had objections on several counts – 1. Both Committee Members who had written and sent the letter were absent from the meeting and could not be questioned or challenged on their*

*letter; I found that curious particularly because Mrs. King never informed anyone other than Mr. McIntyre that she would not be there and Miss Volpicelli although she had told me earlier in the week that she may not be able to be at the meeting never followed up to say she wouldn't be there, 2. The letter was inaccurate, and 3. I had asked our Attorney to see if this was a violation of the Open meetings law.*

*Within the letter itself there is a basic premise for Mrs. King's and Miss Volpicelli's position – they state in their letter concerning suggested changes to the budget - In quotes "When these budgetary changes were suggested , Chairman Carpender responded without any hesitation, (open quote for Mr. Carpender's statement) "we are not going to re-write the budget." When I read the letter I could not recall making such a statement, however, I wanted to be sure so I have taken the time to view the entire meeting twice – I never made this statement in fact I took exactly the opposite position. In response to a comment about low level fruit I said "If we have low hanging fruit I personally would like to apply that to the GAP not keep the school open and still have the whole GAP but that is a Committee decision not my decision" – When somebody questioned why we are not sticking to what came out of the Council meeting I responded "I wanted to give all members of the committee the opportunity to voice what they wanted to voice" – Based on the Committee's discussion of the various recommendations I said "I don't believe the support is here to go 1 by 1 by 1 but I can't stop that; I am going to take Angela's motion." I did say on numerous occasions I am not going to vote to take money out of this budget while we still have a GAP. Somehow from all of this Mrs. King and Miss Volpicelli accuse me of saying without hesitation "we are not going to rewrite the budget." They went on to say that because of this fictitious statement made by me they realize that School Committee majority are closed minded, not receptive to change, refuse to take responsibility, and are misleading the public. This is an affront to the dedicated and hard working members of the School Committee who happened to vote in the majority on this issue. Disagreeing on how funds are being used or appropriated is not misleading the public – an inaccurate letter is.*

*I also allowed motions on the floor to take money out of the accounts mentioned in their letter and other accounts. Miss Volpicelli's motion called for using the Prudence Island Tuition to Bristol, the \$17,000 Fund Balance, and the using the entire Stipend for the Attendance officer. This motion was seconded and placed on the floor. This motion was then amended to replace the Tuition and Attendance Officer money with monies from the School Committee Expense Account, the Certified Retirement Account, and the Prudence Island Ferry Transportation Account. Both the amendment and the main motion failed.*

*Lets address those areas for a moment – Tuition Account; using this money would have been counting it twice, Attendance Officer; required by law and goes beyond the normal school day, School Committee Expense in the current budget has a remaining balance of \$702.50 with the majority of it used to meet our obligations to the Rhode Island Association of Schools Committee, Prudence Island Transportation – after checking the charge this year*

*from the Prudence Ferry Company is \$6.70 per student round trip In our budget we used the projected fee of 7.50 – the lower number is for commuters and we are checking to see if we can use this, Certified Retirement – using the suggested saving from this account is a concern because we don't know the potential impact of legislation on this account.*

*I have been involved with the School Committee since 1991 as a member or active spectator in meetings. In all those years I have witnessed passionate and sometimes heated debate. However, when the vote was taken and the dust settled, with one exception that I can recall, those members on the losing side either supported the majority or at the very least did not continue the debate in other settings by blindsiding other Committee Members and using innuendo, false statements, or insults to continue to pursue their position.*

*We are in this together and I hope in the future we can put aside this type of action and rhetoric in order to further what is best for all of our students in open, civil, and courteous discourse.*

2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Graduation is on June 19<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM. Agenda changes for tonight's meeting are as follows: Approval of Minutes, presentation of the UCOA, and item (d) on the Business Agenda, Discussion on Technology Plan will be moved to a future meeting.

a) **Teaching and Learning:** No report.

b) **Finance and Operations:** Ms. Tague gave her report under the Business Agenda.

c) **High School Liaison:** Absent.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

a) **Requests for Leave of Absence.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee approves the requests for Family and Medical Leave in accordance with the backup information."

b) **Appt. – House Leaders.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee approves the House Leader reappointments and the Math Coach/Coordinator appointment at Portsmouth Middle School for the 2009-10 school year as presented."

- c) **Appt. – Department Heads, PHS.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the School Committee approves the Department Head appointments at Portsmouth High School for the 2009-10 school year as presented.”

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to approve Consent Agenda items (a), (b), and (c) as presented. So voted 7-0.

Dr. Lusi recognized Lisa Mello, Grade 6 House Leader and ELA Coordinator; Christine Homen, Grade 7 House Leader and Science Coordinator; Lisa Freeman, Grade 8 House Leader and Modern Language Coordinator; Kristen Borges, Math Coach/Coordinator; Camille Frankel, English Department Chair; Meryl Moore, Fine Arts Department Chair; Patricia McCarthy, Math Department Chair; Marjorie Cogar, Modern World Language Chair; Michael Medeiros, PE/Health Department Chair; Jeffrey Schoonover, Science Department Chair; James Betres, Social Studies Department Chair; J. Peter Dugan, Special Education Department Chair.

Items (d) – (i) were moved to the Business Agenda.

## 5. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

- d) **Appt. – Literacy Coach, Full-Time.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #1-6/9/09, to the position of Literacy Coach, full-time, effective July 1, 2009."
- e) **Appt. – Literacy Coach, Full-Time.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #2-6/9/09, to the position of Literacy Coach, full-time, effective July 1, 2009."
- f) **Appt. – Literacy Coach, Full-Time.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #3-6/9/09, to the position of Literacy Coach, full-time, effective July 1, 2009."
- g) **Appt. – Literacy Coach, Full-Time.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #4-6/9/09, to the position of Literacy Coach, full-time, effective July 1, 2009."
- h) **Appt. – Literacy Coach, Part-Time.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #5-6/9/09, to the position of Literacy Coach, part-time, for the 2009-10 school year."

i) **Rescission of Teacher Non-Renewals/Displacements.**

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to approve items (d)-(h) on the consent agenda. So voted 7-0.

Mrs. King commented on the new teachers doing the same job that our reading teachers already do. Dr. Lusi explained that reading teachers were laid off, and the literacy coach positions are replacing the reading teachers. The job description is clear that the literacy coach is to work in the classrooms. These positions will remain as promotional positions, which mean that hiring is based on qualifications. Five people are proposed for 4.5 positions, and 4 of the successful candidates are from within our district. One difference is that the Literacy Coaches would be a minimum of 181 days, up to 190 days, if restricted funding is available. Dr. Lusi indicated that they are not new resources, but the literacy coaches will be assigned across the district depending on the greatest need. The literacy coaches will be meeting with Mrs. Jermain to review data and PLPs and to deploy the literacy coaches according to need.

Dr. Lusi introduced Lisa Phaneuf, and also announced the remaining Literacy Coaches, Brita Beitler, Kurt Totten, Laurel Oliveira, and Kim Hancock (.5).

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to approve item (i) rescission of teacher non-renewals/displacements, as presented. So voted 7-0.

Mrs. Perrotti inquired about the rationale on some of the recalls. Dr. Lusi explained that teachers must be laid off in February. Often times, more teachers are laid off than necessary, but if the district knows that the teachers will be needed, based on enrollment numbers, the teachers are recalled before the end of the school year so that unemployment benefits do not have to be paid. Dr. Lusi indicated that her first preference would be to not lay them off in the first place. Mr. Carpender explained that recalls are done in a systematic way so that the district is not responsible for unemployment benefits. If, based on student enrollment, the teachers will be needed, then the teacher is called back.

Dr. Lusi indicated that specifics of job categories cannot be discussed. Mrs. Perrotti questioned the rescission of 12 teachers and how it impacts the budget. Dr. Lusi explained that FTEs are already in the current budget. We have to wrestle with the demands of running our system at a basic level, while considering the budget.

Regular Business Agenda:

Item c) was moved to the top of the Business Agenda.

- c) **PMS Salt Report.** Mr. Amaral described the SALT process, and introduced Lisa Pita, Anthony Rivard, and Alison Ernest. Ms. Pita described the self-study process. Ms. Ernest reviewed the overall findings on student learning, student learning for reading, and student learning for writing. Mr. Rivard outlined the overall findings on teaching and learning, findings on teaching for learning in reading, findings on teaching for learning in writing, and numeracy. Ms. Pita summarized the commendations and recommendations for PMS. Questions of the committee were answered by Mr. Amaral and his team.
- a) **Presentation on Uniform Chart of Accounts.** This item was removed from the agenda and will be presented at a future meeting.
- b) **Portsmouth United Report.** Mrs. Raymo explained that Portsmouth United is a group that was established to help PTOs and boosters obtain tax exempt status from the IRS. Mrs. Raymo requested that a School Committee member serve as a liaison to Portsmouth United.
- d) **Discussion on Technology Plan.** This item was removed from the agenda, and will be presented at a future meeting.
- e) **Update on FY 2009-10 Budget.** Dr. Lusi has not received information on State Aid for next year. She provided information on some of the proposed pieces of the budget. Dr. Lusi has not heard anything official on Prudence Island. She is continuing to move forward in her inquiry. One potential proposal is to move all Elmhurst students to an area at the Portsmouth Middle School. Mr. Amaral and Mr. Ettinger explored the feasibility and they came up with some recommendations, regarding restroom facilities and blackboard adjustments. They both reported to Dr. Lusi that, with some modifications, this proposal is doable.
- f) **Discussion/Approval – April Financials.** Ms. Tague stated that there is no significant change in revenue. The district received additional impact aid in May, but is still looking at revenue shortfalls in state aid and in tuitions. The projection on expenditures through the end of June shows a variance in payroll of approximately \$37,000, which is very tight. There is no change in health care, and the district is still anticipating a shortfall in this area of approximately \$81,000, as well as an approximately \$10,000 shortfall in dental care. The health and dental shortfall will be more than offset by the GHGRI fund balance share which is due to the district in the amount of \$106,000. There is a further development pertaining to retirement and state aid cuts. Beginning with the April 10<sup>th</sup> payroll, Ms. Tague was informed that the district should no longer send additional money to the retirement system for employee contributions. The Retirement Board did not include the approximate \$1.9 million balloon payment for teachers, which will add an additional shortfall of approximately \$82,700 in potential state aid. Ms. Tague stated that this is basically a wash for the amount we would lose in state aid.

Utilities are approximately \$74,000 in deficit. There are positive budget variances in other areas which will help offset this amount. The Special Education Assessment will be approximately \$278,000 over budget. Overall, the budget is getting tighter and tighter.

Unemployment is being analyzed and a report will be provided to the committee at the next meeting. Ms. Tague does not anticipate a surplus, and projects that we will come in at budget.

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to approve the April financials. So voted 7-0.

#### 6. **SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA**

- a) **Facilities.** Mr. Buddemeyer thanked Mr. Honnen for facilitating the June 3 meeting. Everyone expressed their opinions and discussed pro/cons. The goal is to have recommendations to the committee at an August meeting.
- b) **Finance.** Nothing to report.
- c) **Health and Wellness.** Nothing to report
- d) **Policy.** Nothing to report

Mr. Carpender asked all committee members to return their copies of hiring forms and related materials pertaining to Literacy Coach positions and rescission of teacher non-renewals.

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge, seconded by Mrs. Levesque to adjourn the meeting. So voted. The Public Session adjourned at 9:55 PM

Respectfully submitted:

Cathy Nash  
Recording Secretary for:

Marge Levesque, Clerk